Sadlier Religion

Catholic Saints with April Feast Days

RESOURCE KIT

Catholic Saints With April Feast Days

Studying the lives of the saints and holy people helps build family faith and inspires Catholic kids. Feast days are an opportunity to remember and be inspired by the lives of the saints, who are examples of holiness for us today. Children and families in your Catholic religious education program can use the short biographies and printable activities below to celebrate popular saint feast days in April!

In this kit you'll find short biographies and printable activities for these Catholic saints with April feast days:

- Saint Gregory XIII, pope
- Saint Teresa de los Andes
- Saint Gianna Beretta Molla
- Saint Catherine of Siena

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Saint Gregory XIII, pope

On April 10, the Church celebrates the feast day of Saint Gregory XIII.

Ugo Buoncompagni was born in Bologna, Italy. He studied law. After he graduated, he taught law for many years. The pope made him a cardinal and sent him to attend the Council of Trent, a meeting in which Catholic rules were explained and revised. Later, the pope sent him to Spain to serve as an adviser to the king.

In 1572, he became pope and took the name Gregory XIII. He was able to deal with problems in the church because he was very intelligent and adept at working with people. He worked very hard to make the Church better and to follow the rules set at the Council of Trent.

Pope Gregory XIII worked closely with the Jesuit order of priests. He sent them on many missions to teach others about the Catholic faith. Today, the Jesuits are priests, teachers, and missionaries and have established many schools, universities and places of learning throughout the world. Pope Gregory XIII also started many seminaries for training priests.

Pope Gregory XIII created the Gregorian calendar, the calendar we use today. The old calendar was too long and did not match with the seasons of the year and the cycles of the moon. This caused the date of Easter to be too early in the year. The Gregorian calendar, created by Pope Gregory XIII, is still in use today. To determine the date of Easter, you can use the following three rules:

1. The date of the vernal equinox, when day and night are equal in length, is always March 21.
2. Determine the date of the first full moon that occurs after the vernal equinox.
3. The date of the Sunday following this full moon is Easter.

Easter can never occur before March 22 or later than April 25!

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Saint Teresa de los Andes

On April 12, the Church celebrates the feast day of Saint Teresa de los Andes, the first saint from Chile.

Teresa was born in Santiago, Chile. When she was baptized, she was given the name Juana. Her family and her friends all called her Juanita. She grew up in a large Christian family. Juanita was intelligent and attended school where she was taught by the Sacred Heart nuns.

Juanita was a normal young girl. She was very happy, cheerful, and attractive. She played the piano and participated in swimming and horseback riding. She had many friends and enjoyed playing jokes on her family and friends. She taught religion to the young children in her parish. Juanita read about the life of the Saint Therese of Lisieux. This French-born saint, known as the Little Flower, was a Carmelite nun. After reading about this saint, Juanita decided that she wanted to serve God as Saint Therese had done and to become a Carmelite nun. At age nineteen, Juanita entered the Carmelite monastery and was given the name Teresa.

During her short life of twenty years, Teresa wrote many letters, sharing her thoughts about God with others. Teresa was very kind to the elderly and to the poor. When Teresa was twenty years old, she became ill and died. Teresa is the first saint from Chile.

Teresa enjoyed doing many of the things children today enjoy doing. She went to school, participated in sports, and had fun with friends. She was an ordinary person, yet she focused her life on Jesus and tried to love others as He loves them.

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Saint Gianna Beretta Molla

On April 28, the Church celebrates the feast day of Saint Gianna Beretta Molla.

Gianna was born on October 4, 1922 in Milan, Italy. She grew up surrounded by a close-knit and loving family. Her father worked in a cotton mill to provide for his wife and eight children. Gianna's family was very religious, and Gianna would accompany her mother to daily Mass. Gianna was a happy child, although she struggled with her schoolwork and battled poor health.

When Gianna was a teenager, her oldest sister died at the age of 26. From this point on, Gianna began to take her faith more seriously. She realized that her faith could not just be a habit, but that she had to live her faith with joy. She began to make more time for personal prayer and meditation every day. Gianna took on a leadership role in the Catholic women's group she belonged to. She encouraged the other women to pray and find opportunities to help others. She said, "The secret of happiness is to live moment by moment and to thank God for all that He, in His goodness, sends to us day after day."

Gianna also became more diligent about her schoolwork. She thought about becoming a missionary to Brazil, but eventually decided that the best way to fulfill her desire to serve others was by becoming a doctor. She was drawn to care for mothers, children, and senior citizens in particular, and she eventually specialized as a pediatrician. Many of her patients felt that she was not only their doctor, but also their friend and confidante.

Gianna married Pietro Molla when she was 32 years old. Both of them were passionate about their jobs, but Gianna insisted that they also make time for other pursuits. They enjoyed entertaining guests, attending plays and concerts, and skiing and hiking. Most of all, they loved their children. Gianna considered her children her "treasures." Although it was unusual at this time, Gianna continued to practice medicine after she had children. She loved her children so much that this love overflowed into her work as a doctor.

When Gianna was pregnant with her fourth child, doctors found she had a tumor that threatened her life and the life of her baby. As a doctor, Gianna was aware of the risks involved in her treatment options. She decided to have a surgery that carried a higher risk for herself but was safer for her baby. The surgery was successful in removing the tumor, and a few months later Gianna gave birth to a healthy daughter, Gianna Emanuela. However, Gianna herself contracted an infection. While modern antibiotics could have saved her, doctors at that time were unable to defeat the infection. Gianna died at the age of 39, one week after the birth of her daughter.

Gianna was beatified by Pope John Paul II on April 24, 1994, during the international Year of the Family. Gianna Beretta Molla's husband and daughter were present at her canonization. Gianna Emanuela followed in her mother's footsteps by becoming a doctor.

Saint Gianna reminds us that we are called to follow Christ through prayerful service in every situation in life. She recognized that life is a gift from God, and she wanted to share it with others. We should pray to her for help in finding ways to offer our own talents and gifts in the service of others.

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Saint Catherine of Siena

On April 29, the Church celebrates the feast day of Saint Catherine of Siena.

Catherine was born on March 25, 1347. The late middle ages was a time of great change in the world and for the Church. The bubonic plague, a deadly and contagious disease often called The Black Death, spread across Europe and killed one third of the population. The Hundred Years War between France and England began. The 14th century was also a troubled period in the life of the Church. During Catherine's lifetime, the pope, who had always lived in Rome, was living in France, which caused problems. This era was also the beginning of the Renaissance, a revival of classical art, architecture, literature, and learning that began in Italy.

Pope Benedict XVI said of Saint Catherine of Siena, "Even in the most difficult times, the Lord does not cease to bless his People, bringing forth Saints who give a jolt to minds and hearts, provoking conversion and renewal. Catherine is one of these and still today speaks to us and impels us to walk courageously toward holiness to be ever more fully disciples of the Lord." (Benedict XVI, General Audience, November 24, 2010)

Catherine was from a very large family. She had twenty-five brothers and sisters. Her family lived in Northern Italy. Her father was a wool dyer, and her mother ran the household and took care of all the children. Catherine did not go to school and did not have a formal education.

When she was very young, Catherine began to find quiet places where she could pray and talk to God. At the age of sixteen, prompted by a vision of Saint Dominic, Catherine joined the Third Order of Dominican nuns. She wore their habit and lived in a small room in her parents' home. Catherine spent three years in this room, praying. After this time, she began to serve those who were sick and poor. People began to visit Catherine because they wanted to follow her example of living in God's love.

There were many disagreements in the Church during Catherine's life. The pope, Pope Gregory XI, was living in France instead of Rome. Catherine believed that God wanted the disagreements to end so she began to write to the pope. She successfully convinced the Pope to move back to Rome.

Catherine continued to write letters to all kinds of people, from the poorest in the land to the richest and most famous. It was considered a miracle that Catherine was able to write well because she never attended school. In her letters, Catherine encouraged people to live in peace.

Catherine's writings are among the classics of Italian literature. The advice and wisdom contained in her writings can still be applied to our lives today. Catherine wrote that no matter where people lived or who they were, they should realize that all their talents and everything they have is from God. Catherine used her talents to have a positive effect on the world. Saint Catherine of Siena was canonized in 1461. Pope Paul VI declared her a Doctor of the Church in 1970. She also holds the titles of Co-Patroness of the City of Rome and of Patroness of Italy.

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Name _____

Pope Gregory XIII

Pope Gregory XIII wanted to make the church better. He was very smart and knew how to work with people. He considered education very important and started schools where men could study to become priests.

Pope Gregory XIII created a new calendar. The old calendar was too long and did not match the seasons of the year and the cycles of the moon. The calendar we use today is the same calendar that Pope Gregory XIII created. It is called the Gregorian calendar in his honor.

On the calendar below, mark the phases of the moon. Each evening, go outside and look at the moon. Draw what the moon looks like each night.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

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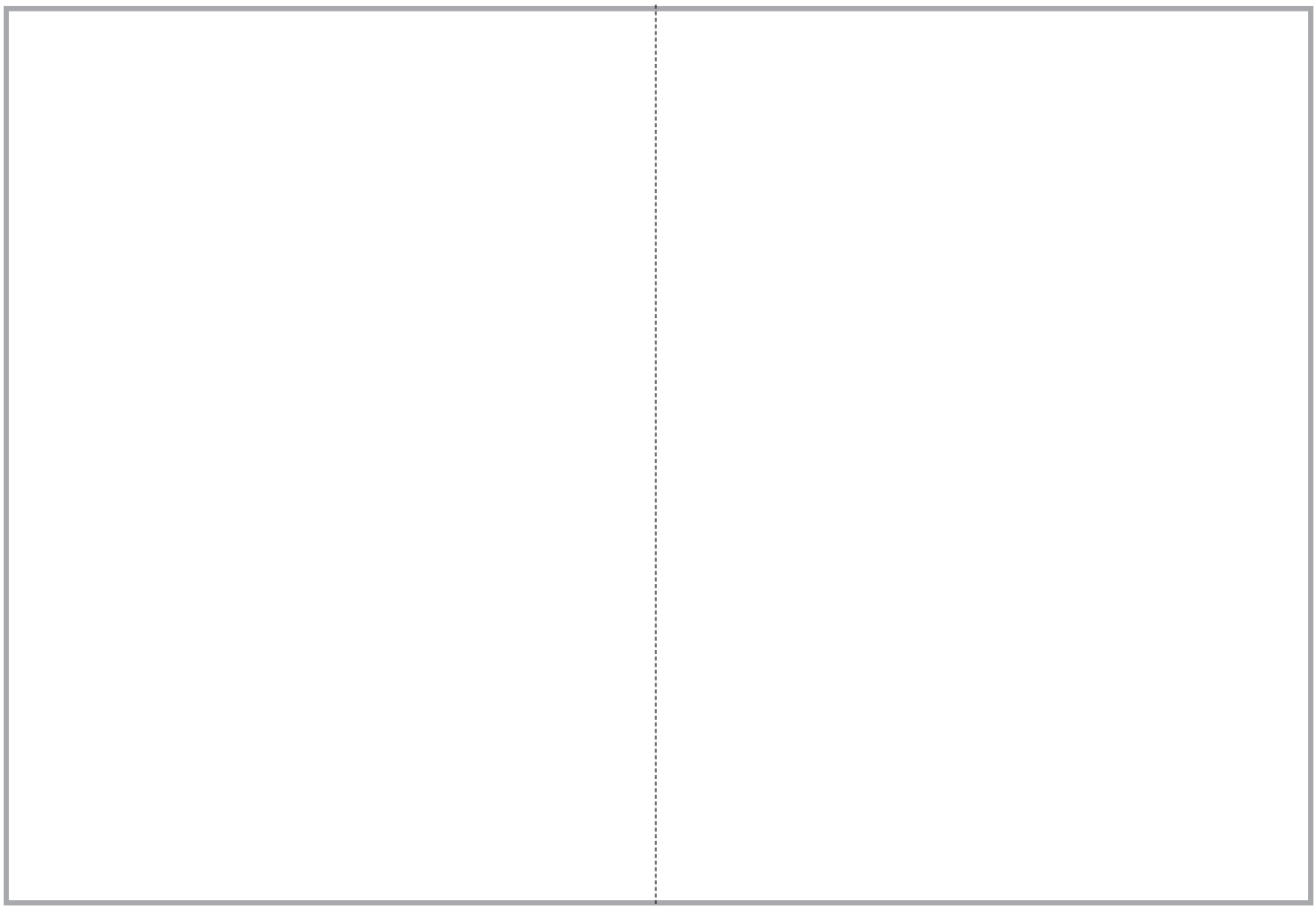
Name _____

Saint Teresa de los Andes

Saint Teresa grew up as an ordinary young girl. She was very happy, cheerful, and attractive. She played the piano and participated in swimming and horseback riding. She had many friends and enjoyed playing jokes on her family and friends. Teresa loved to write letters sharing her thoughts about God. She was very kind to the elderly.

Like Teresa, we can be kind to the elderly. On the card below, write or draw something to share with the elderly. Cut it out, fold it in half, and decorate the cover. Give this card to a grandparent, an older relative, or an elderly neighbor.



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Name _____

Saint Gianna Beretta Molla

Saint Gianna was a very active person. She was interested in skiing, hiking, music, theater, and dancing. She enjoyed doing these activities with others. By sharing her interests with others, she demonstrated her friendship and respect for others.

Think of one activity that you enjoy.

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How can you share your enthusiasm with others?

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Name _____

Saint Catherine of Siena

Catherine wrote letters giving advice and encouraging people to live in peace. She was not wealthy or well educated, but Catherine was able to influence many people.

Think of someone you know who could use some advice or encouragement. It could be someone in your family, a neighbor, a classmate, a famous person, or a friend. In the space below, write words of encouragement and advice to this person. Cut the letter out and send it if possible.

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